

STONE WALLS

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SUMMER, 1981

When my family moved to Blandford from a town in the Connecticut Valley back in 1957, we were constantly amazed at the purity of the air in this hilltown. From our property on North Street, close to the Blandford Country Club, we had a panoramic view to the east that reached as far as the city of Springfield. On a clear day we could see the clock tower in Court Square. We used to joke that if we had powerful enough binoculars we would be able to tell the time by this clock. Over the years we noticed that such clear days were more and more scarce as the pollution of the industrialized valley increased. Often the Weather Bureau would announce a condition called "inversion", and on these days the pockets of the valleys were packed solidly with a thick smog and even the fringe of trees along the stone wall that marked the edge of our land was slightly blurred by haze. Still, it was evident that we, on our mountain, were far removed from the really serious pollution, and we breathed more easily (quite literally!) because of this.

After the loss of my husband, I moved from the hills to a home "down below", to use a Blandford term. Luckily for me my son has purchased the old house on North Street, so I am able to visit freely and escape the smoggy days in the valley by traveling up Route 23. My spirits still lift each time I drive up the hill by the White Church and see the steeple strongly outlined against the bright sky. Once again I experience the elation, sense of well-being, that comes with inhaling the fresh, clean air of the Berkshire hills.

Barbara (Brainerd) McCorkindale

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drawing by Natalie Birrell

A Quilt for the Town of Montgomery

by Frona Camp

The Thimble Club Bicentennial Quilt was presented to the Town of Montgomery on Sunday, September 14, 1980. It is a composition of the following squares:

1. The town Seal in the center which was enlarged by Paul Furioni, a senior at Gateway High School and the applique and embroidery work was done by Nancy Curtin.

2. The old Post Office was done by Marion Cushman.

3. Natalie Birrell made the image of two senior citizens looking out over the hills.

4. Eunice Hall Spencer (Dinty) made the square representing the Hall Place.

5. Sand Springs is the work of Marilyn Chressman Vernon.

6. Linda Stipek imagined the Union Hall (Town Hall) as it had been in horse and buggy days.

7. Judy Crean's needlework shows us Center Cemetery.

8. The Chapman Home (Old Squire House) is depicted by Joyce Dupelle.

9. The School House (Pitcher Street and Main Road) was rendered by Ruth Pope.

10. Marion McGuinness embroidered and embellished the old out house.

11. Field Fowers of Montgomery was done by Raymore Pope.

12. The Camp Place was stitched and remembered by Frona Camp and Lorna Thornton.

13. Grace Newfield Barns represents Farm Lands of Montgomery with her square.

14. Floris Monat shows us Foliage along Main Road.

15. The Library with embroidered names of past librarians was made by Bernadette Bennett.

16. The Montgomery Reservoir was made of appliqued pieces and embroidered by Kristen Holve Sherpa.

17. Names of Montgomery's organizations were arranged around a wagon wheel of stitchery by Janet Goodman.

MONTGOMERY THIMBLE CLUB

The Montgomery Thimble Club was formed in June 1920 by ten ambitious talented women. The organization was formed to do community service, visit the sick, help those in need, help the church and help to furnish the Town Hall.

Many quilts were made and raffled off to raise money for the different projects, so when the group was asked to do something for the Town's Bicentennial it was decided that a town quilt should be made.

The quilt squares were made by club members as well as some talented residents of the town. It took over a year to make the quilt and it was presented to the town on September 14, 1980. Each square represented some part of the town's history.

1. The Seal's design depicts the present day Montgomery Community Church, built in 1849 to replace the original town hall which burned down. The design is surrounded by the wording "Town of Montgomery, Mass., Incorporated November 28, 1780." The design was first used on the annual Town Report of 1955 and is now worn proudly by Montgomery residents and friends on various articles of clothing. The town seal was enlarged from 2 inches to 24 inches for the quilt by Paul Furioni, a senior at Gateway High School. The seal was worked in various methods of quilting by Nancy Curtin. Nancy resided in Montgomery for a few years and now lives in East Longmeadow.

2. Montgomery Post Office - Mrs. Adelaide Pittsinger lived for many years in this house located on Russell Road. She was appointed Post Mistress from July 1895 to July 1919. She died in 1928. Reuben Herrick came to live with her in about 1896 or 1897. After his wife's death in 1937 he asked his step son Milo E. Cushman and wife Marrian to live with him. They moved there in 1938 and stayed until Reuben sold to Lucy Hall in 1952. The house was torn down in 1976. Kenneth and Linda Stipek and family built their home to the rear of the property in 1977.

3. Mountain View Nursing Home - The nursing home with its view of Mt. Tom and the near by hills was the inspiration for the square depicting two senior citizens.



4. Hall Family Homestead - built by Daniel Barrett in 1790s was later owned by Lathrop and Betsy (Leffingwell) Squire. In 1848 it was sold to their son James Squire. It next became the property of his daughter, Eunice and her husband, Andrew Hall. The homes of three of William Hall's daughters were built on part of the original property.

5. Sand Spring - Pure spring water from a never failing spring surrounded by a wall of stone, located on a path that connects Pine Ridge Road with New State Road, now hidden in the forest of towering trees, the spring was one of the main sources of water for the town's people. It was also a gathering point where people came for their water and to visit with their neighbors.

6. Union Hall, built in 1849. The Union Hall was originally a Methodist Church.

Later in the century membership in the church died out. At the April 1, 1895 Town Meeting it was voted to acquire the Methodist Meeting House. Two years later Town Meeting members voted to make necessary repairs to the building. In the early 1900s Grange #45 used the hall as a meeting place. About 1905 they asked if they could buy the building from the town, but the offer was declined. In 1928 the kitchen addition was built with funds donated by generous individuals, residents of the town, the A. P. Pettis fund, and \$100 from the Thimble Club.

The balcony over the entrance of the building was removed in the mid 1950's. The Selectmen's office and rest rooms were added in the late 1950's. Today it is known as Union Hall. All Town Meetings and social events are held there.



7. Center Cemetery is one of the four cemeteries maintained by the town. Center Cemetery off Russell Road is the only one now being used. The others being maintained by the town are Sandy Knoll off Old House Road, Pitcher Street off Pitcher Street, Elijah Clark off Pomeroy Road, and the Center Cemetery with burial plots available.

8. The Park Chapman House was built by a Mr. Aldrich from Easthampton for Gilbert Squires of Montgomery. The one story kitchen part was added from materials of the house that had been standing on the site. The Squire family occupied the house until their death. Elbert A. Chapman purchased it from the Squire Estate in February, 1902. He and his family have lived there since that date. His son Parke is presently living there with his wife, Hazel and two of their sons.

9. The Corner School of District #4 at the corner of Main Road and Pitcher Street was built in 1867 replacing a previous structure across the street, corner of North Road. The shed addition was built about 1920 for storage of cordwood and a toilet facility. The entrance was facing southeast toward Mountain View Farm and in the 1930's the Pitcher Street entrance was added due to new State laws requiring two exits from a building as well as more windows. Water for the school was originally drawn from the well across the street on Main Road and later from Washburn's in a large crock with a spigot. Grace Hall was the teacher when the school was closed in 1956.



The Old School House



10. This was the early plumbing. According to Bill Hall who installed many of the flush toilets in Montgomery the outhouse went out with the arrival of electricity in Montgomery approximately 1924 to 1927. Several outhouses still exist in town. This particular one was on the Church-Cushman property on Pine Ridge Road.

11. Wild flowers which grow in Montgomery include lady slippers, wild strawberry, flowering dogwood, bluebells,

violets, star of Bethlehem and wild columbine.

12. The Camp Family Homestead--Issac and Mary and son John came to Montgomery in 1830, settled on Bungy Road. John got married and the house became too small as his family increased. They had the house built on Main Road about 1839-1840 as it looks today. A veranda was added in the early 1900s across the front of the house. Later in the late 1940s E. Earl Camp had shales put on for warmth and looks. Edwin Earl Camp's family was the last Camp to live there. He sold in 1955 to Mr. and Mrs. Clayton Farnham. Mr. Farnham sold to Mr. and Mrs. Frederick Lynch. Mr. Lynch removed the verandas and shales and painted it yellow. Mr. Lynch sold to Mr. and Mrs. Robert Perkins in January 1977. They are the present owners. This house served as the North End Post Office. Also they had the only store and gas station in town.

13. Farm Lands--These are one of the products that the early farmers raised. Most of the farm have been abandoned or sold to the Westfield Watershed.

14. This Fall scene on Main Road, Montgomery includes a small bridge and brook that flows behind the town hall.



15. Grace Hall Memorial Library--The Montgomery Library was instituted in 1896 and housed in the town hall now the home of the Historical Society. The library was moved to the David L. Allyn home near the fire station where Delia Allyn was the first librarian.

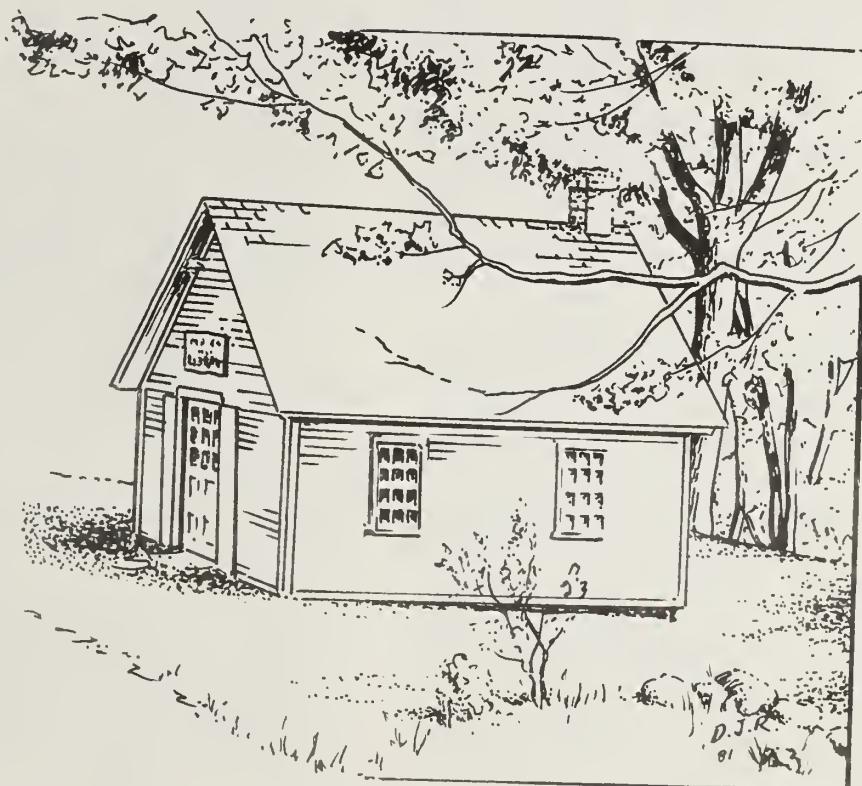
The town now has its own library building built in 1924, and dedicated to Grace Hall, a previous librarian. Miss Augusta Williams became librarian and held that position until 1933. Grace Hall took her place and still held that position at her death in 1975. Her daughter, Dorothy Tinney is now responsible for keeping the library going.

16. The Reservoir--The Town of Westfield bought fifty-five acres from Mr. Moore in 1873 for the Reservoir. Being one of the main attractions for Springfield

guests of the Summer Hotel on the top of Mt. Montgomery it was said that the Reservoir was a mirror lake cuddling in between the hills and fed by mountain springs. It furnished first class boating and fishing.

17. Organizations--The wagon wheel square was designed to incorporate the names of the various organizations influencing Montgomery history. A few, such as Bosworth Drum Corps, the Grange #45, Homemakers, Men's Athletic Club and Women's Club are no longer in existence. The Thimble Club is the oldest. It was started in June 1920. Scouting, the Historical Society, Council on Aging and 4-H Club continue today.

The quilt has been framed in glass since the presentation and now a permanent part of the Town Hall.



The Library

I Washed Some, Baked Some

by Helena Duris and Mary Ann Daniels

Have you a diary or other personal record compiled by one of your ancestors? Perhaps you will consider donating it to your local library or historical society. A descendant of Mary Ann Daniels recently presented just such a document to the Granville Historical Museum.

This remarkable journal gives an insight to life as it was lived in the days before electricity, automobiles, radio and television.

People of that era were fully involved in their families and communities. They enjoyed social and cultural affairs and never missed the appliances and conveniences we deem necessary to life.

Mary Ann sums up most days in four to six lines. Only mentioning things she found noteworthy. The weather, often determined the days activities. The mundane daily chores have been omitted.

Each year Mary Ann kept an ongoing list of births, deaths and marriages. She kept account of all the money earned and all the expenditures. She made butter, sold eggs, kept records of her husband's saw-mill business, and when she had time she braided whips. This was a cottage type industry common to the area.

Mary Ann's diary is unique in that it is the diary of a woman. Few were kept and fewer survived. The reason is perhaps self

evident, these journals are homey and informative, but don't detail battles or other historic events. They were not considered very exciting or valuable. Yet these strong women were the backbone of our nation.

Here are a few glimpses of community life as lived in Granville before the turn of the century. The quotes were chosen at random.

Wednesday....Pleasant. Mr. Hayes worked here. They put Paris Green on the potatoes in the forenoon, and put up a wire fence in the afternoon. I made 10 jars of currant jelly. At night we all went to Frank Wrights and got some potatoes.

Friday....We picked a bushel of peas. Sadie Daniels is 10 years old today. Went to Westfield bought John a new suit paid \$4 for it, also some new pants \$1.25.

Saturday....Pleasant. Frank Wright and his wife were here. Later we went to Florence Cases to look at a new cow. In the forenoon Lewis cut his oats. Evening I braided.

Tuesday....Cloudy. Lewis plowed the onion bed, and the front part of the garden. I made hard soap. In the afternoon I went to the store and called on Belle. Mrs. Cotton's birthday 81, its Wolcott Daniel's birthday he is 47 years old.

Wednesday....Pleasant but cold I braided whips. Lewis chopped down tie

trees. He plowed in the afternoon. Johnnie and Willie went up to singing school. We set a hen. Lewis and Lucian went to Westfield to sell our tobacco.

Thursday....Lewis carried the calf down to Leroys and got some flour in exchange. I finished my whips. Orlin Gibbons called. Today is Allie's 6th birthday. It is also Miss Sally Brown's 99th.

Friday....Mary came up and worked on my dress in the afternoon..A very pleasant day. I baked bread in the morning. Ellis and Edna here for supper. Had mocked oysters.

Monday....Cloudy. Mary and I and the girls walked up to the Corners. Lewis came up later for us. We were married 24 years ago today.

Sunday....A very pleasant day. Robert and I went to the Baptist Church. Mr. Brown gave his farewell sermon. Mrs. Green, Hattie Oysler and Mary Root were baptised. I went to the water to see them.

Wednesday....Cloudy in the morning, later it cleared off. Lewis and I, Allie, Albert and Frank all went to Congamond Ponds to hear the bands play. I had a very good time. I saw a lot of people I knew.

Thursday....Pleasant. I washed some, baked some, stirred the cream, washed the floors. Little Maude would have been 3 years old today.

Friday....Robert and I went to church. The Elder was there, it was the quarterly meeting. We heard a good sermon. The text was "Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling."

Saturday....Lewis went to Westfield bought me a new pair of cloth shoes paid 75 cents for them. Frank mowed hay east of the potato patch. Edna and Ellis came home with Lewis. They were in Holyoke, they bought Allie a velocopede.

Wednesday....Pleasant. Lewis worked on his cart body. A very quiet 4th. In the evening Lewis and Robert went up to the

Corners to see the fireworks. I stayed home and wrote a letter to Uncle William. I braided some. Today is Hiram Hayes birthday, 46.

Thursday....A very pleasant day. I baked pies and cakes. Lewis cut wood in the forenoon, then went to the Corners to get the horse shod.

Friday....Stormy all day. I made yeast. Lewis hung the clothes press doors and helped me put up the looking-glass. Charlie and Eliza were here for supper. Later I braided.

Sunday....Snowed all day. I baked beans and rye bread. Elmer Archer came.

Monday....Lewis fixed his buck board. Curtiss Phelon's wife died. Lewis ploughed a piece for turnips. I baked bread and made suckertash. We then cleaned the stove.

Tuesday....Lewis delivered 2 cord of wood to Mrs. Godard. I made a pan of raised doughnuts and one of cookies. I went down down to Mrs. Foxes and made a call. Lewis got me a new pair of rubbers cost 45 cents.

Thursday....Pleasant and warm. Lewis went to the Corners with another load of wood for Mrs. Godard. I washed the windows in my kitchen, in the afternoon we put down the carpet in my bedroom, put up the bed. Mr. Andrews and his wife Ruth, and Sadie spent the evening.

Friday....Willie had the toothache and couldn't go to school. I balled butter, later I braided.

Monday....I washed some colored clothes. Dr. Chatfield came to see Lewis. Lewis went to Southwick and had 4 bushel of rye ground.

Tuesday....Pleasant. I went up to Edna's. We all went up to Mrs. Archer's and spent the evening. Our horse Jim is sick.

Thursday....It rained all day. The lots are all covered with water. I baked custard pie and a cake. Mrs. Andrew was here in the afternoon. What a lonesome day not a

team went past.

Friday....Foggy and misty all day. Roads are all washed out. Old. Mrs. Walker was here. Mother died 8 years ago today. Lewis worked making a body for his light bobs.

Saturday....Lewis made a pig pen and got the pigs in. He weighed them, one weighed 38 pounds, the other 32 pounds. Bronson, the essence pedlar, was here. I washed some.

Monday....Pleasant. Lewis plowed for Frank. I balled 15 pounds of butter for Westfield. We had peas for dinner.

Tuesday....Lewis went to Westfield with the butter. A very warm day. Mary Fox

went after her new teeth. Later Lewis commenced moving his steam sawmill over on the Williams lot. I braided.

Monday....Windy with some April Showers. I made yeast. Lewis went to the Corners with a load of ties. I made a rabbit pie for supper. Ellis and Edna here. Baked bread and braided, Michael Arnold's barn was struck by lightning and burned to the ground.

Wednesday....Raining in the forenoon. I ironed and washed floors. Lewis went to the creamery and bought a barrel of buttermilk.

Mary came and cut out my black silk dress.



Coping with Coons in the Corn

by Lucy Conant

Almost everyone enjoys the taste of freshly picked sweet corn. Although sweet corn takes quite a lot of space and isn't very suitable for a small vegetable garden, it grows relatively easily. The problem with successfully raising and harvesting sweet corn is more likely to be due to animals than to weather or bugs. Raccoons, like people, are very fond of sweet corn and are most discriminating in their taste, waiting until the corn reaches its peak of tender sweetness. If they would be content to eat a few ears each night, that would be no great problem. But, no, they cruise through the corn patch, knocking down the stalks when they can't reach the ears, taking a taste from every ear and rarely completely eating any one ear of corn. In one night, one or more coons can completely ruin an entire crop of sweet corn.

This past year I raised quite a large area of sweet corn, not only to sell at the Huntington Farmers' Market but also to sell to local stores and to individuals in the Chester area. Four varieties of corn were planted from mid-May to mid-June. Because of the cold, dry weather in June, the corn grew slowly at first. Finally with rain and warmer weather, it began to grow rapidly. Then on July 21st, this section of Chester had a ferocious thunderstorm with gale winds, hail, and over five inches of rain. During the storm, I looked out at the garden and all I could see was a sheet of

water running down the hillside. Although the plants themselves were not washed out, a lot of topsoil washed down the rows. Some of the corn stalks were partially blown over, and all of the outer leaves were shredded by the hail. However, the corn soon recovered and went on growing.

I picked the first early variety of corn at the end of July, and about this time noticed that a coon had been nibbling on a bag of grain in the garage. I think that coons are interesting, intelligent animals, but I don't want them eating all my sweet corn. My main weapon is Jason, part Labrador Retriever, who usually sleeps in the house. Now, however, I began taking him for a late evening walk around the corn that was beginning to ripen and then letting him out during the night to go on patrol. Although once he went off to visit a lady friend in the village, he did take his watchdog responsibilities seriously; one night he cornered and killed a raccoon near one of the fields of corn. I also tried putting out pieces of garden hose - a suggestion that I had read in one of the gardening magazines - but that had no effect at all. One thing that did seem to work fairly well was to put a portable radio out in the cornfield overnight. One just has to be sure that the station to which the radio is tuned stays on-the-air all night. There now was a second coon around, and one night Jason treed him and kept him up in a chokecherry tree all night. That coon

escaped, but at least he hadn't been eating corn when he spent the night in a tree.

During this period the coons had eaten some of the early corn, but now the main crop of corn was about to ripen. I wanted to be sure to have corn to take to the stores on Friday and to sell at the Farmers' Market of Saturday. So, I decided the only thing to do was to spend the nights next to the field of ripening corn. Asleep, I wouldn't hear the coon, but I knew that Jason would stay with me, and he would detect any coon approaching the corn patch.

So instead of going to bed that Thursday night, I took my sleeping bag, pillow and flashlight and with a puzzled dog went up the hill to the corn field. I slept fairly well, and Jason stayed with me, going off on patrol several times during the night. A light rain began around dawn, and the dog and I moved into the house for another nap. The next night was a beautiful moonlit night and I enjoyed watching the clouds and the moon before going to sleep

in my sleeping bag. It was another peaceful night, although once I thought I heard a noise by the gate when Jason was on the prowl. Was it a disgusted coon leaving for a safer spot?

Anyway, the corn was picked and sold that weekend, and on Saturday night I slept in my own bed, relying on the radio for coon prevention. From then on, there was only minor coon damage to the rest of the corn, and this occurred in an area some distance from the radio. Jason continued his occasional night patrols, but caught no other raccoons. They seemed to have decided that the sweet corn wasn't worth the danger of the dog and the strange noise from the radio. Maybe too, the smell and sight of a human in a sleeping bag next to the corn had discouraged their night time raids. In any case, the sweet corn was picked and sold, Jason had earned his dog food for the year, and the raccoons and I are in a state of neutrality until the sweet corn ripens next year.



Drawing by Cecilia Sansone

The DeWolf's of Chester Hill

by Frank S. Nooney

Photographs from the pamphlet, "The First Congregational Church of Chester"

For most of the more than one hundred years the DeWolf family lived on Chester Hill - actually, Chester Center - some one of them occupied a prominent place in the community and took an active part in its affairs. My family lived in that area a good part of five generations, most of that time within a mile and a half or so from Chester Center, and over the years had many fairly close associations with various members of that colorful family.

Thaddeus Kingsley DeWolf, remembered by the older folks as "T.K.", born in 1801, was the first of that family to settle at Chester Center. He came there as a medical doctor in his very early thirties, practiced his profession, took an active part in community affairs and lived there until his death. He and his first wife, Cornelia, had at least four children, -two sons and two daughters- but his wife and a young daughter died on the same day in 1847. Six weeks later he married a young woman of 22 years and they had at least one child a son.

There seems to be a difference of opinion as to where in Chester Center T.K. actually lived. It has been said that he lived in the big square house directly across from the school and too, that he lived and had his office in a smaller building closer to the former Rev. Bascom house which was 100 yards or so from the square house. All I know about this is that T.K. had his office

in the smaller building because his name was still on the door when I was attending the Center school. I am also quite certain that my grandfather lived in the square house for several years prior to his death in 1898, though this was probably after T.K.'s death.

I do not know when T.K. died as it was long before my time, but there were many stories still in circulation about him. Most of the stories seem to depict him as a strong and energetic individual and one made him out as a stern disciplinarian. This story told of how, on one occasion, he punished a son, Homer, by horse-whipping him until he drew blood and then compelling him to bathe his lacerated legs in salt water. To punish a child now-a-days by horse-whipping would probably invite a criminal charge of child abuse but in that era it was a fairly common form of punishment in some families, including my own, for what were considered the more serious misdeeds. The additional salt water treatment in this instance was considered by many as an added sadistic touch, but it was probably intended as an antiseptic.

Oscar Coleman DeWolf, born in 1835, was the eldest of T.K.'s children. He, too, became a medical doctor and served in that capacity in the Civil War. I first became aware of Dr. Oscar when I began attending school in Chester Center in 1903. At that time he was living in the square house

across from the school but I do not know if he acquired that property by purchase or inheritance. He was a dignified, reserved old gentlemen, somewhat hard of hearing and with a noticeable limp from a poorly set broken leg. We school children were somewhat in awe of him, probably because of his rather austere appearance. Actually, however, he was a kindly man who never spoke crossly to the children unless, perhaps it was when one of us chased an errant baseball into one of his prized flower beds on the lawn between his house and the school. Strangely enough, it now seems, I had until recently always thought of him as a bachelor. He was always alone on his occasional trips to Huntington past our place, and I never saw a woman around the house who might have been his wife. Furthermore, I can't remember ever hearing a mention of a Mrs. Oscar DeWolf. Not long ago, however, I came

across an old record which referred to him as the husband of Harriet Lyman, so it would appear that the marriage terminated before I knew him.

About 1904 or 1905 Dr. Oscar hired carpenters and began renovating, remodeling and modernizing the house and barn. When the job was finally completed it was a real showplace, at least when compared with other residences in the vicinity. As a part of the remodeling job, he had a wide veranda built along the front and one side of the house, a unique feature of which was that it completely enclosed (floor and roof) two very large hard maple trees. I suppose this can still be seen. He also had one large room in the house made into a library which he stocked with shelves of books. He engaged Mrs. Frank Foote as librarian and opened the library to the public one day a week. I, for one, first became acquainted with the works of



Dr. Oscar DeWolf



Dr. Oscar DeWolfe's Home

Horatio Alger, G.A. Henty and many others from the books on his shelves. Besides the library, he made other contributions to the community. He hired men to renovate and redecorate the Congregational Church at the Center and, later, other men to clean up and recondition the old part of the cemetery across the road. This included cutting brush and weeds, resetting leaning and fallen stones, and spading and reseeding it all. On another occasion he offered small money prizes to three children chosen by the teacher. I may have forgotten the reason for the prizes but I haven't forgotten the award as I was one of the lucky winners. Another time he offered to advance money so that two local teenagers could attend college. Sometimes in the summer he would make his house and grounds available for neighborhood gatherings such as socials and other parties. On such

occasions, the big veranda would be hung with numerous Japanese lanterns. These colorful decorations always gave the party a rather festive air, but because of the paper container and lighted candle they had to be watched carefully. They couldn't be used when it was windy because of the fire danger. His life style was that of a country gentleman in comfortable circumstances. He kept a housekeeper and a man to take care of his horses and vehicles and the outside work. It was rumored that he had made considerable money from a fortunate investment in Keely Cure stock. The Keely Cure was a patented method or program which included secret medication and, probably, institutional care, for the treatment of alcoholism, that seemed to have had considerable success in the later part of the nineteenth century. I remember hearing discussion about people who had been benefited from it.

The old doctor died while I was still attending school at the Center. He left instructions for his remains to be cremated. That was the first any of us had heard of that practice.

Another son of T.K., from his second marriage, was DeWitt Clinton DeWolf, usually spoken of as "Clint" or "D.C." As Dr. Oscar was the eldest and DeWitt Clinton the youngest of T.K.'s children, there was a considerable difference in their ages. At some point before my time, D.C. had acquired the Bascom house and other buildings, including the one T.K. had used as an office. When I first became acquainted with the place there were several barns and outbuildings but I do not know if they were there already or if he had them built. He had also acquired much land, some said more than 1500 acres,

mostly adjacent, abandoned farms which were quite rough, stony and wooded. The entire spread was known as the DeWolf stock farm, as he kept quite a few horses and a sizeable herd of cattle.

The DeWolf farm was run in somewhat the same manner, but on a more modest scale, as the estates of many wealthy men were in those days. He kept a foreman and hired hands the year round, but the place seemed to be run more as a hobby or status symbol than for profit. I recall that D.C. had the first silo in that area as well as some farm machinery that was new to us. There was a huge one-cylinder gasoline engine in one of the buildings with overhead shafting which operated some of the machinery. It was mounted quite close to the big wooden water tank from which the school obtained its drinking water. Two of



Aaron Bascom House

the boys would carry a pail full over each day and it would stand on a table in the hall with a tin dipper near by for the use of one and all. When I became big enough to take part in the water carrying chore, it was all I could do at first to muster enough courage to squeeze in past that snorting, gasping, banging monster to fill the pail.

D.C. had married, it was said, into a well-to-do family which had extensive coal mining interests in Illinois, and he was supposed to have had an active part in the business. About June of every year I can remember until about 1912, the entire family with the maid and loads of baggage, would "come on" from Chicago to spend the summer at the farm. In those years D.C. was seldom seen in public dressed in other than sort of semi-formal attire - striped trousers, cut-away coat, light vest, high, hard felt hat and, of course, the ever present big cigar. His walk, his dress, his bearing - everything about the man - suggested affluence, high station and importance.

Two or three times a week D.C. would drive to Huntington with horse and buggy attired as usual. It was well known then that he was fond of convivial libations and often on his return trip would be in full oratorial voice. Sometimes when I heard him coming in the distance I would conceal myself behind a convenient stone wall and in some awe watch his gestures and listen to him berate some imaginary foe.

It must have been around 1912 when it became apparent to all who knew them that something had happened that greatly changed the family life style. They no longer spent the winters in Chicago but stayed at the farm year around. Most of the live stock was sold, farm operations were scaled down and the steady help dismissed. Local day help was hired only when actually needed. As a teenager I worked on the farm one year in haying and

D.C. actually worked with us, at least he had his coat off and held a hand rake. It became increasingly evident that he was in a severe financial bind as it became more and more difficult to collect wages, small as they were. Often, when asked for payment he would say, "I am financially embarrassed at the moment but am expecting a draft from Chicago in a few days." One year in order to have additional income, he took in cattle to pasture. The cattle, mostly young stock, would be collected in suburban areas in the spring, driven up to the farm where they would be pastured and looked after over the summer for about \$3.00 a head. About September or October they would be driven back, delivered to the owners and the fee collected. The year I remember, a teenaged friend of mine, Frank Sherwood, participated in the return drive. He had some wages coming for previous work he had been unable to collect, and he managed to withhold enough money from the collections to pay himself what he had coming. D.C. was furious. He not only delivered a classic tongue lashing but threatened arrest, jail and all sorts of dire things, but Frank did not give in and nothing further happened.

I left the Hill shortly thereafter and saw D.C. again on only two occasions. He was the principal speaker at the first Armistice Day celebration in Chester which I attended, and in 1920 when he was campaigning for political office (Congress, I believe) I attended one of his rallies in the Springfield area. As I sat, somewhat spellbound, watching his vigorous gestures and listening to his vehement denunciation of all things Republican, I had only to close my eyes, let loose my imagination and I regressed to a small boy on Chester Hill watching and listening from behind a roadside stone wall as the great man drove slowly by.



Drawing by Karin Cook

The Chosen Master

by Helen Scott

As I drove the car into the garage, my son, Loren, raced toward me, and with a merry sparkle in his blue eyes, he burst forth with: "Mom, *my* dog has found me!" The lad's older brother had appropriated the Dalmation which was supposed to be a family dog, so I realized that the younger boy meant another dog had arrived which he wanted for his very own.

Nevertheless, when I saw it, I was disturbed over the condition of the unfortunate animal which had crawled to our home for shelter. It was barely breathing, its paws were bleeding, and the animal's spine and ribs gave it the appearance of an expiring carcass. Snow had covered the ground for several weeks, which could account for the bleeding paws, and, when closer inspection disclosed two sore nicks in her left ear, we assumed that the dog had been thrown from a car and then shot when she attempted to follow the vehicle.

"I gave her warm milk and a slice of bread, but she cries and turns away from me if I go near her," Loren said anxiously. "She acts as if she'd been beaten."

Living quarters were set up in the garage for the dog, a part German Sheperd whom we named "Lena" because of her emaci-

ed body. By the following morning, all the food Loren had placed in a dish for her had disappeared, and, when the garage doors were opened, the dog also had disappeared. She was far from well, but the decision to leave was hers to make since we had no right to restrain her.

Less than half an hour after she vanished, Loren joyfully rushed outside to carry the returned animal into the kitchen for warmth and food. We knew her sore paws needed attention, so we gently bathed them in warm Epsom Salt water, and spoke softly while stroking her head. After a time, her whimpering ceased, and she looked up into our faces. Oh, the pleading expression in that maltreated animal's soft brown eyes!

Lena's claiming us as her family taught us what real devotion is. She would not touch her breakfast until she had gone to each family member's chair to look up into our faces for her "Good Morning, Lena." She was always cheerful, gentle and trusting. A dependable dog, she'd announce the arrival of cars and people with a sharp bark. Our lives were enriched by her fine character traits.

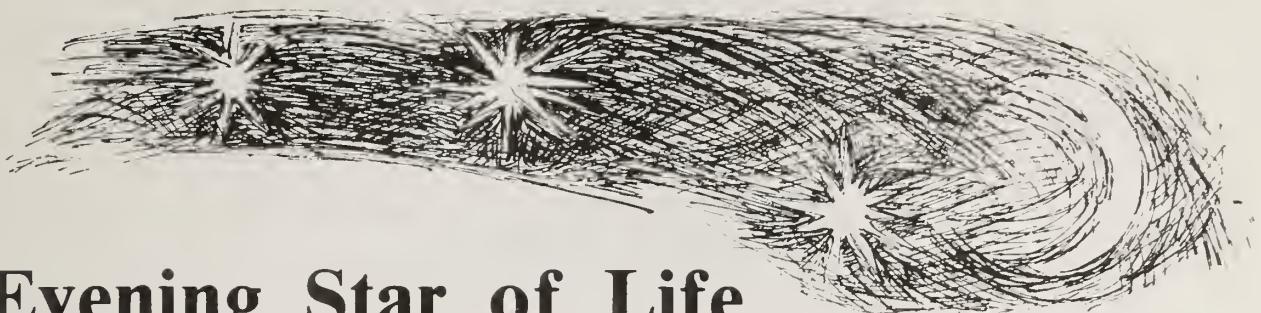
Indeed, the whole family remembers how fortunate we were that Lena chose Loren for her master.



Drawing by Natalie Birrell

Percy Wyman has lived and observed life in these hill towns for ninety-one years. Most of those years were spent in Blandford where he grew up on a farm now owned by the Vermes. He travelled to other parts of the State working on the roads. His farm is also in Blandford. He and his wife Gertrude worked long and hard, overcoming many adverse conditions, making a living in these hills.

About fifteen years ago he began to keep a journal, recording in verse his feelings and remembrances of the days gone by. The *Stone Walls* Editorial Board members have been reading this journal with fascination and picking out pieces which we will publish in coming issues. We are grateful to Mr. Wyman for letting us share his journal and hope that our selections will give our readers the same pleasure and insight into his philosophy of life that we have felt.



Evening Star of Life

Drawing by Natalie Birrell

by Percy Wyman

Now my days are numbered; I cannot work anymore,
But all that I've accomplished was added up before.
I cannot sing the new songs, but the old I'll never forget
As they still linger in my mind, since childhood yet.
How wonderful to remember those songs of yore
And in my memory remember the friend I had before,
My brothers and sisters I had back in life
Have now all gone, and some had such strife
I've still got a sister, who helped so much at home
When most everyone was sick she carried on alone.
She helped bring my last two brothers into this world.
Cora was I would have to say a wonderful girl,
But now she's in her nineties and not too strong.
Just she and I left, we don't know for how long.
Yet life is like a book, a beginning and an end
Neither can help the other, we depend on relative and friend.
We've both traveled a long journey uphill and down,
Yet the star grows dimmer every day I've found,
And when life is over and we have gone to rest
Whether we've done right or wrong is anybody's guess.
All we know is that what we done we thought then right,
That is something we'll never know while in this life,
And what's beyond the river of time we may and may not know.
So many have gone before us; none came back though;
So as long as we live we'll take whatever comes,
And leave all our woes and worries behind to some one.
We know no one will take it too hard when we go,
As at our ages, we can for all our work and trials a little show.
There's one thing I can be thankful for while I've life to say.
Thanks to him who guided me, for the wife he saved that day.
She was a real lady, older, but true and brave,
And wed to a country lad worked hard and saved.
She never once criticized me for doing anything wrong,
And our lives were like a music box playing a lovely song.
I know I made many mistakes in life; who hasn't, I pray,
As no one does everything perfect; that isn't man's way.
But now she has gone to rest--a spot chosen by us two.
So today I have only half of my heart left to carry through.
Yet I'll try to do my best while traveling life's journey alone,
And if I could how I'd rejoice to not leave Gertrude at home alone.

Bygone Fourths

by Percy Wyman

From Notebook #7

I oft times remember what we boys used to do
On the night before the Fourth. We would trick quite
a few!

There would always be three or four meet at the
store.

When you're out for deviltry, you don't want any
more!

Of course ringing the church bell at midnight was
due,

And we had lots of fun playing tricks on folks, too.
It was Fourth of July, and a neighbor had proof,
If his buggy was found on the ridge of his roof!

Back then lumber by wagon was hauled a long way
Up Tannery Hill every other day.

With an afternoon trip there would be a full load
Before starting for Westfield away down the road.

Well, one Fourth at night, a half load we found
All tied up with chains with the twister around.
On the Fourth of July boys are s'posed to have fun,
So we got on one side, lifting hard, every one!

What a tussle to lift those two wheels off the gound!
But we pushed and we tugged, and at last it did
bound.

And instead of a wagon with a load on the top,
The load balanced sideways, and then didn't stop!

Of course this was really a mean trick to do
On one of our neighbors that all of us knew,
But on Fourth of July with temptation so near,
Many boys or young men will play tricks that are
queer.

There were many out-houses tipped over, I'd say,
Just for fun, and all done in a spirit of play.
As I've said, we would ring the church bell as a rule,
But on one Fourth the minister thought US to fool.

So he left the bell rope from the window to swing.
As we grappled it, of course, there came forth not a
ring.

So a couple climbed up to the window above,
And then in the dark up the long steps did trudge.

As they thought, the whole tongue was removed
from the bell,

So they groped in the dark till they found it, as well
As the bolt and the cotterpin. Then, I am told,
They had to light matches, to make it all hold.

It had been a hard climb up that long winding stair.
They were glad to return to the window back there.
They slid quickly down on the rope to the ground.
What a shock for the preacher to hear that bell
sound!

There once was a man bought up land in the town,
And built roads of gravel both up hill and down.
In front of the store on each side he built piers.
But no one in town liked to see them appear.

So the night of the Fourth some folks came to that
place
With rope and with chains those piers to erase.
With a chain round a pier and one tied to a tree,
The rope fell between, and one pier toppled free.

A short distance away by the side of the road
Somehow or other a telephone pole stood,
And by using the tactics that worked as before,
Soon the other pier fell. None were left as before.

The man who had built these did good for the town,
Sold fine building lots and raised houses around.
The carpenters of Blandford had work for some
years,
But in business this man was quite shrewd, it was
clear!

Of course we bought firecrackers when I was a boy.
But in those days we had little money for joy.
On the Fourth you might have fifteen cents or a
dime.
So I bought some black powder, a quarter pound,
with mine.

Then I'd go where some stumps stood where trees
were sawed down.
With an auger I'd drill out a stump all around.
It was hard work to drill down six inches, clear
through!
Then from Father I'd get fuse and blasting caps too.

I'd pour in an inch and a half, I would say.
Of powder to make a good blast on that day
Some newspapers tamped with a rod made of wood,
And then sand or brick dust tamped in tight and
good.

One minute per foot the fuse burned, that I knew.
After filling the hole with damp dirt, packed hard,
too,
I'd leave one foot at least of the fuse sticking
through.
This I'd light with a match, then run fast it is true!

Sometimes it exploded, sometimes it went out,
But I kept making holes till my powder ran out.
Now Father bought sky rockets to set off after dark
Roman candles were fine, too, for having a lark!

About 1918 I saw a real fireworks display.
We all went in a car to Forest Park one day.
Narrow roads and large crowds made it hard to get
there.
**Not used to such crowds, Father drove with great
care.**

Sky rockets and other lights shone in the clouds
But I could not enjoy them for Betty yelled loud!
I guess she yelled more as each bomb burst in air.
I've seen fireworks but once since my trip over there!

Linda Siska: Hilltown Artisan

by Barbara McCorkindale



Drawing by Natalie Birrell

Linda Siska sat in her studio applying glaze to one of her hand-crafted ceramic mugs and talked about discipline.

"Working as a potter has taught me the importance of discipline," she said.

She described her apprenticeship with a Japanese potter on the island of Kyushu as a very difficult time. He demanded perfection of her, and day after day came into the shop and methodically smashed the work she had done which he considered inferior. Although this was disturbing then, it has since proven to be a valuable experience. Linda, who taught English in Westfield, Massachusetts, for two years before she went to Japan and for two years after returning, says that her new attitude towards discipline completely changed her teaching methods. After her return she was much more demanding of her middle school pupils: children need to be taught the importance of high standards, she said, and a teacher is obligated to require these standards of his or her students.

Linda's work is evidence of her own well-disciplined labor. Her products are lovely to look at, graceful and colorful. She mixes her own glaze in muted shades of blue or green, and each piece carries her own leaf design which could be considered her trade mark. Her objectives in creating her work are two fold: "Pots should be functionally sound as well as aesthetically pleasing," she says. She emphasizes the fact that to her simplicity and symmetry are important aspects of beauty, and her work bears out her words. Many people comment on her pots as being unusual and even ask if she perhaps uses a method that is different from that of other potters. She insists that the steps she follows are the traditional ones, but the fact that she lacks the conventional background in art may account for her unique touch.

For Linda did not come to her trade by the usual steps. At St. Lawrence



University in Kenton, New York, she was an English major. She had a friend who was an art major, and she often visited the ceramics studio with this friend. Linda dabbled in this new medium and found it fascinating, but when she asked to take the course in ceramics, she was refused because she was not an art major. She feels that this triggered a challenge which stayed with her; she was determined that she would learn to make pottery without the help of a course. Her initial experience as a potter came when she worked in a shop on Martha's Vineyard for three months in exchange for the use of the owner's studio. She has subsequently served twice as an apprentice to a potter, once, as mentioned, in Kyushu, and once in Shutesbury, Massachusetts, for Robert Woo. She now feels that she would like to go back and take basic courses in art, filling in the theory and experience that she lacks. One reason for this is that she has been asked to teach ceramics at a college level but she is unable to take such a position without the requisite basic college courses.

Linda's work is a slow process. It takes approximately two weeks to complete a pot, since it must dry before its first firing and then it must be waxed and the design applied before glazing and the final firing. Her pots are lighter than most because she "throws thin." This refers to the process where the potter works at the wheel with the clay shaping it into the desired form. A

really adept worker is able to make his product thin but durable. The untrained buyer may select a coffee mug because it feels heavy and solid, but he may also tire of hefting the weighty mug each time he wants a sip of coffee. Today's buying public is more aware of real quality than the buyer of a few years ago, and he will look for lightness of weight and thinness of pottery walls as marks of superiority.

Evidence of Linda's high quality work is her acceptance as a participant in the February, 1981, Baltimore Winter Market. This is a prestigious Crafts Fair which accepts only 28 percent of all potters nationally who apply each year. At the time she was interviewed for this article, Linda was preparing her wares for this event, a time-consuming task, in order to be able to take with her a sizeable quantity of pots. When one works alone and is a perfectionist, it is impossible to rush. This means, then, long hours at the wheel and at the glazing table, and extra practice in that valuable commodity, discipline. The typical American "success story" is not possible in hand-crafted trades for obvious reasons; the artisan can produce just so many objects per day and retain the high quality of his craft. For example, Linda estimates that the greatest number of mugs she can throw in one day is 35 to 40; 15 honey jars or 15 tea jars comprise a day's work each. If the artisan decides to produce more to meet a large demand, he must either sacrifice quality or hire people or machines to speed up the process. Either way the value of the product suffers. The true craftsman reaches a limit of production beyond which his integrity will not let him go. It goes without saying that Linda is one of these.

Working as a craftsperson, Linda says,

although it demands long hours of labor, it has a great many rewards. One saving grace is that the artisan is the sole determiner of his time; no one can require him to punch a time clock or produce a minimum of work each day. He sets his own standards and puts in his own hours. Although the conscientious craftsperson may work well over the conventional 40 hours per week, these hours are flexible. One can throw a pot at 10:00 PM as well as at 10:00 AM. This leaves time for daylight activities such as cross-country skiing and gardening, Linda's favorite hobbies.

Another pleasant aspect of the craftsman's trade is the travel which is involved. Most of her work is sold at Crafts Fairs, such as the one in Baltimore, and this means traveling and meeting new people. Potters are an unusual group. According to Linda, who is in a position to know, they lack the feeling of competition which is so often present when persons of a similar calling get together. She thinks that the reason for this attitude is their awareness of the trade as a difficult one. Rather than trying to outdo each other, they are anxious to assist their fellow workers in any way possible.

Although the chief market for Linda's pottery is the Crafts Fairs, where her goods are sold both as wholesale and retail, it is possible to purchase seconds of her products at her studio on Norwich Hill in Huntington. To the average person, some of the pots which she says are slightly flawed appear perfectly serviceable as well as attractive. Judging from the auspicious aspects of this young potter's career, a purchase at this time may well be a wise investment. In the future the possession of a genuine "Siska" could be an indication of a collector with superior taste and discrimination!



THE SEVEN STEPS IN MAKING A COMPLETE POT

1. Wedging the clay

This consists of kneading, as in kneading bread, to get the air out.

2. Throwing the pot

The clay is molded on the wheel to the permanent shape it will have.

3. Drying

Approximately two days are required before the next step can be taken; actual time will depend on weather conditions.

4. Bisque firing

This must be done to make the product durable; it brings the piece to "flower pot" stage.

5. Waxing

The design on the pot is painted in wax in Linda's product. There are other methods of applying design, but this is the stage at which that method is used.

6. Glazing

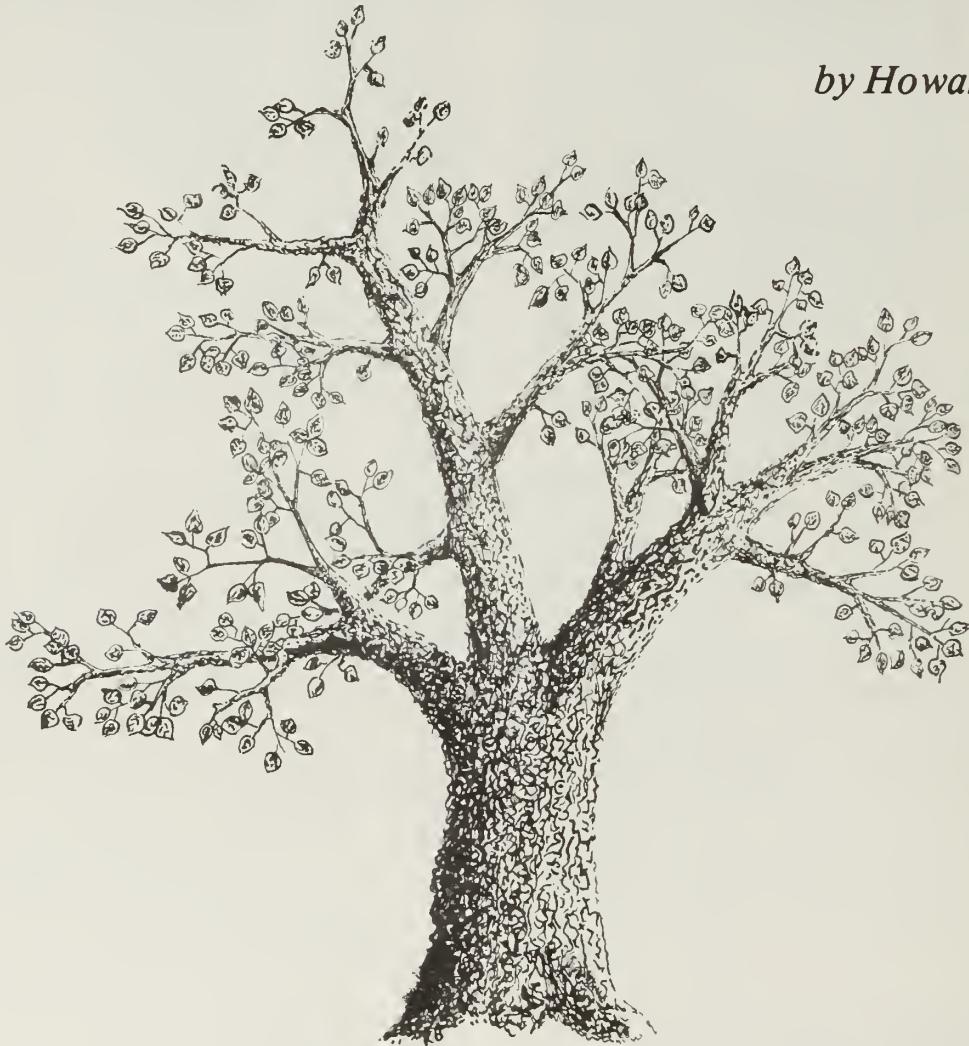
A glaze is applied by dipping the pot in a bucket, as Linda does, or by applying it with a brush.

7. Final firing

When the pot is removed from the kiln at this time, it is complete. The entire process has consumed about two weeks.

THE FOREST OF WESTERN MASSACHUSETTS HILL TOWNS

by Howard Mason



To the modern resident of our hill towns, trees are generally an ever present and almost taken for granted friend. But it wasn't always so. The first settlers must have regarded trees as both enemy and friend. The forest yielded raw materials for many of the settlers' needs, but at the same time were an obstacle in cultivating the land, and provided a hiding place for Indians and possibly dangerous wild animals.

Actually the boundless forests of the New World were a major drawing card for the first settlers. In the early 17th Century,

Europe and especially England was suffering from a severe timber famine. Wood, in those days without cheap metals, abundant fossil fuel or electric power, was the major raw material. It provided shelter and machines of all descriptions as well as the main source of heat and power. As populations expanded and land was cleared for agriculture in the Old World, wood became a scarce and expensive commodity.

Hence a land with abundant supplies of wood to be had for the taking was a most attractive area. Much of the land near the coast of Massachusetts had been burned

over many times by the Indians as an aid to hunting and primitive agriculture. Thus the countryside was largely semi-open park-like areas of scattered large White Pine, with little undergrowth, and was relatively easy to clear for the planting of crops. The trees provided material for forts, houses, and trading stock to send back to the old country in exchange for much needed manufactured goods. In fact one of the first cargoes shipped from Winthrop's Boston was a shipload of clapboards, presumably sawed with a pit saw.

One hundred and fifty years later, when the settlers pushed beyond the Connecticut River into the hills of Western Massachusetts, a different type of forest stretched from the settled land in the valley to the Hudson River. This forest, except where fire had recently left its mark, was what is known as a climax forest, consisting in this area mainly of Beech, Sugar Maple, and Hemlock, with a scattering of other species common in our woods today: Oak, Red Maple, Ash, Birches, and formerly Chestnut.

This was a forest of large trees with many windfalls among them in various stages of decay. It must have been a discouraging country to attempt to build a road through, let alone clear enough land for a cabin and fields enough to support a family. One of the first structures usually built in a town was a water-powered up and down saw mill to saw the best logs for building and export.

The settlers persevered and by the time of the Civil War about 75% of the land was cleared for fields and pasture. Old paintings and photos show the hill towns as open land, with only scattered trees in hedge rows and patches where the land was too steep or rocky for agriculture.

Then came a great change. Soldiers returned from the War with stories of vast tracts of fertile land in the Middle West, with few trees, where one could plow all day without hitting stone. A mass exodus began with farmers practically giving away their hill farms to get to the promised land. This abandonment of farms is still continuing. The neglected fields largely seeded in to White Pine as this tree was well adapted to such conditions. The seeds could blow a long way, readily take root, and grow rapidly in vacant pastures and fields.

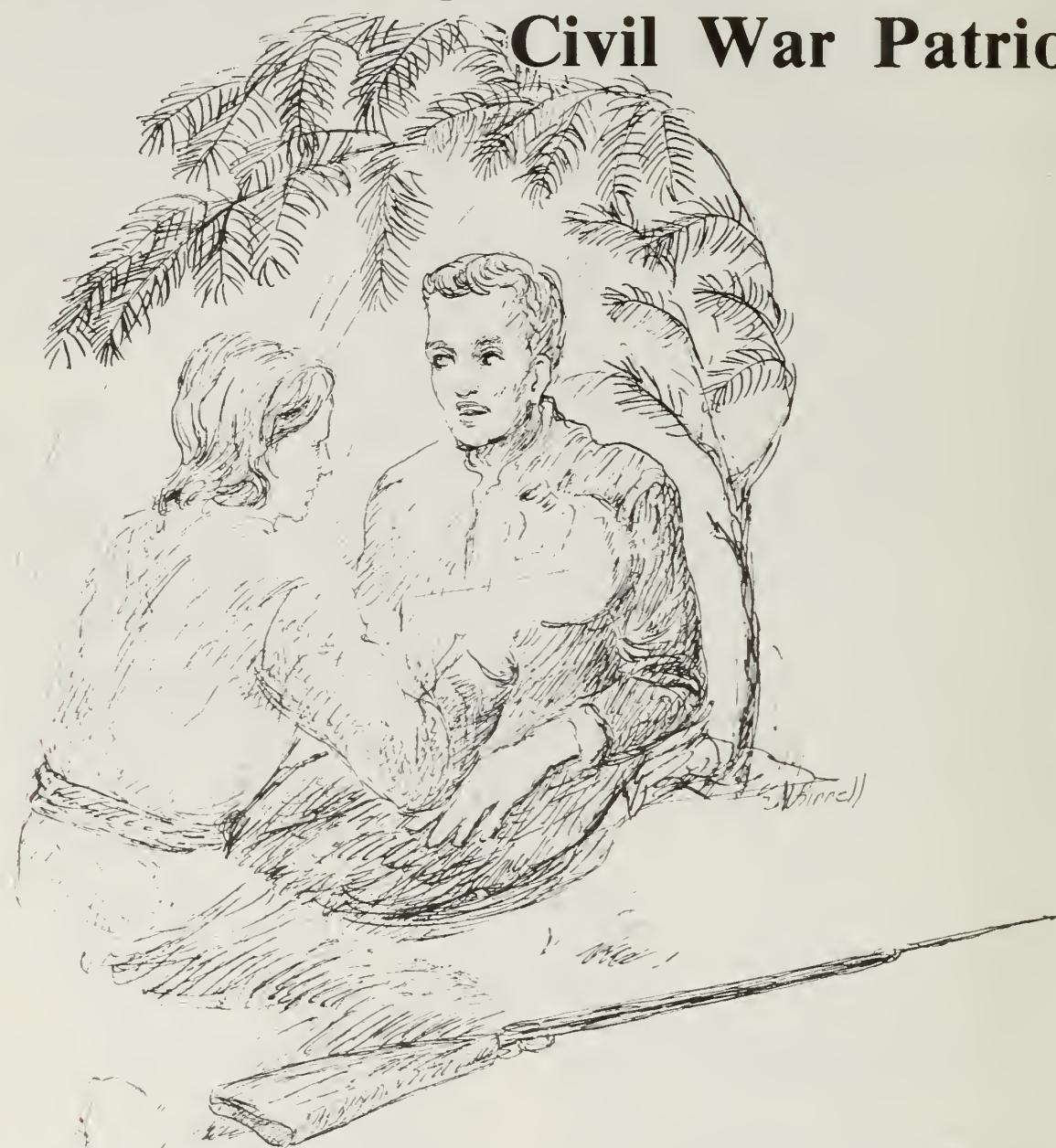
By the end of the nineteenth century these old-field Pine stands were mature, ready to harvest, and a market existed. Expanding industry and agriculture needed vast numbers of wood boxes for shipping their products. Old-field White Pine was light, easy to work, and strong enough for boxes.

The portable steam sawmill was developed and set on these old-field lots. The Pine was easily logged with teams pulling wooden sleds. Huge amounts of lumber were sawed in the hill towns by companies such as New England Box Company, Tiffany and Pickett, West Box Company, Peck Lumber Company, Ward Lumber Company, Diamond Match and others too numerous to mention.

Today most of the old-field Pine has vanished with the virgin forest before it. The Pine lots came back into a mixture of hardwoods, Hemlock, and Pine. Our hills are almost as forest covered now as they were in pre-colonial days, but the species are different and the trees smaller. They provide a promise of energy sources and raw materials for the era which we are now entering, one of scarcity of fossil fuels and of petroleum and metals as raw materials.

NEXT ISSUE: The History of Logging in the Hill Towns.

George S. Harger, Civil War Patriot



In 1840, George S. Harger was born in the village of West Granville, Massachusetts. Like most of his contemporaries, he was eager to help this country in a time of trouble. He enlisted April 26, 1861 when he was twenty years old. He became a corporal in Co. I. 10th Reg. which was commanded by E. K. Newell.

Space does not permit going into detail telling of the hardships and privations he endured. This information comes from various sources, and to my knowledge had never been in print. What follows is a brief outline.

At the Battle of Fair Oaks he was wounded in the right shoulder. His rifle

was shattered, and he was knocked down, narrowly escaping death. Shortly thereafter, at Spottsylvania Court House, he was wounded in the thigh. He lay there all day under fire, partly covered with dirt. At night he was taken and laid down behind some rebel guns. On the second day he saw a rebel with a half dozen canteens on the end of a musket. He managed to raise himself and attract the rebel's attention, who came over to where he lay. He asked for water.

"Give you water, you damned Yankee! You killed my brother yesterday!" He threw down the canteens, seized his musket, the right hand at the small and the left at the tail, bent, and made a lunge at the corporal as though he would run his bayonet through him. He said, "I am going to kill you, you damned Yankee, but first I am going to torture you." Three separate times he went through this motion, the last time the corporal opened his eyes, and noticed the rebel's countenance had completely changed. The rebel threw down his musket and said. "For God's sake, what am I doing? What am I thinking of? Where you are now I might be tomorrow."

He took a canteen, opened it, bathed the corporal's brow, and gave him a drink. He inserted a piece of pine brush in the ground to help keep the sun off the wounded soldier. He then said he would send an ambulance for him when he got back to camp. True to his word, an ambulance came and took Harger to a hospital where he was the only Union soldier present.

George S. Harger was in six enemy prisons before the war ended. He was at Fair Oaks, Orange Court House, Gor-

donsville, Trevallion Station, and Richmond. Many times he had seen prisons emptied of all prisoners except himself; his wounds prevented him from walking.

After being in the six prisons, he was paroled, sent by boat down the James River (1863) and an hour after he landed, the boat was blown to atoms by a rebel torpedo.

In 1864 he was again captured by Phil Sheridan, but his wounds were so severe that he could not be moved, so he was left in rebel hands. When he did start for liberty it was in the arms of a stalwart comrade, a western cavalry man, who carried him out bodily. He was reduced in flesh from 172 pounds to 90 pounds. In lieu of clothing he wore big mats and rags, his feet being covered with pieces of bloody blankets.

When he arrived at Dutch Gap he saw the Stars and Stripes floating in the breeze. It said to him, "Here is food, clothing, friends, money and everything a weary wounded soldier could want."

Most of his comrades believed him dead. When he did arrive home he was on crutches and was hailed as one who had risen from the dead.

After the war, Colonel Parsons of Northampton stated that the regiment suffered severe losses in the left flank movement of General Grant. In his report of that engagement, he included George S. Harger as dead. You can imagine his surprise two years later when George Harger appeared at his door.

George Harger recovered from his war injuries. In 1875 he was a dealer in hay and straw in Chatham, New York. He died August 30, 1883 when he was 43 years old. He was run over by a street car in Ayer, Mass.

by Helena Duris

A LAWSUIT AGAINST THE TOWN OF
WORTHINGTON TAKEN FROM A
PAPER PREPARED BY CLEMENT
BURR FOR A MEETING OF THE
HISTORICAL SOCIETY AUGUST 21,
1934.

There have been several lawsuits in the town of Worthington which attracted considerable attention. The town has been called on to defend itself in one or two cases. One case was in about 1885, and was the case that a man by the name of Alderman brought against the town for a defective highway or an impassable highway. This Alderman was a cripple, that is, he couldn't walk without crutches, anyway, and it was difficult for him to get around....He used to drive around with a team. One day he came over to Stevens' mill with some grain to have ground. It was one of those mornings in winter that we have in New England, bright and nice, but turned to be a blustering bad day. A little after noon he had his grain ground and started for home. Coming up Randall's Hill he tipped out in a ditch into the snow. He struggled and struggled and finally he attracted the attention of Mrs. Mary Tower, who gave the alarm, and he was

rescued without any serious effect. He sued the town. The case was tried in Springfield, as he was of Chester, so it was tried in Hampden County. The selectmen took down several witnesses from Worthington. Will Veats had come along soon after Alderman was taken away, and he said the road was all right. Alderman's lawyer tried to make out the road was defective, not only by being impassable but because there was a deep ditch there. He questioned Veats about it. Veats didn't think there was anything dangerous about it. Mr. Randall was telling me about it. He said, "When I got on the stand, he asked me the same question, and I (He pulled at his chin as he said)—and I told him that I didn't think the ditch was any larger than was necessary to take care of what water came in the spring of the year, but when I got home and looked at it, I tell you what, Burr, I went to chucking stones into that ditch!"

Indians in Woronoco- Believe it or not the Woranoake Indians lived along the Westfield River for many years in the area of Huntington, Russell, Woronoco. Their chief was the feared and mighty Greylock, so named for his grey hair. Greylock led his warriors in many raids made in Western Massachusetts for more than fifty years. Because of his might and ferocity Mt. Greylock the tallest mountain in Massachusetts was named after him.

A STORY TOLD BY MR. FRANK S.
PARSON AT A MEETING OF THE
WORTHINGTON HISTORICAL
SOCIETY JULY 12, 1941

In the early days of the automobile, you had to be very careful when you passed a team. The proper thing was to stop and let the team go by, or let the driver lead the horse by if he had to. This day there had been an accident on Clark's Hill. It was a foreign car, and it did not have good brakes. I had a call that morning that these ladies had been taken to the hospital, and I must come up and get the car. We had got up about half a mile below the Stevens Mill, and we turned and went up the road that leads to Frank Buck's. The road was wide enough until we met a team. We got over as far as we could and stopped. We didn't know what the horse was going to do. I had gotten out so far the wheels were in the soft part of the road, and were stuck. I had had too much experience with country roads, and noon came along, so I suggest to the fellow (apparently the chauffeur) that was with me that he walk up the road. I knew we hadn't passed any

farm the other way. I thought he could get a pair of horses to pull me out. If you ever were stuck on a country road, you know that the best thing to do is to get a pair of horses, regardless of the cost. He walked until he came to a farm. They didn't have any horses there, but said there was a farm up farther that had a yoke of oxen. He went on until he found Mr. Buck, and Mr. Buck was willing to help, but the cattle was out to pasture, so he had to go out to find them. That pasture consisted of two or three hundred acres, and he had to go out around it to find them. It was a long time before my man got back, and another hour before the team came. Buck hitched on and pulled us out in a jiffy. I asked him what I owed him, and he said. "You city fellows come up here and are in a great hurry, and you get into trouble, and you bother us to get our horses out, and our cattle"---I was ready for a good-sized bill, and he said, "It is going to cost you seventy-five cents"!

Travel-Believe it or not it took about three days to attend a quilting bee which was very common in the colonial period. One day to travel to the home where the quilting bee was held, one day to make the quilt and another to make the trip back home.

“Pop” Decoteau

by Brian Barnes

As I approached this old, grayish looking house, I took a deep swallow, looked up at it, then proceeded to the back porch, where I knocked very cautiously at the door. After waiting there for a moment, I noticed a small figure out in the field in back of the house. I jumped off the back porch and ran all the way to the edge of the field, and as I got closer, the figure started to take shape. It took the shape of a short, bent over, lumpy walking man. A sense of strength could be seen in this man's body.

After introducing myself and telling him of my intentions, we sat down near one of the old shack type buildings. As I sat there listening to him talk I looked about and then realized not only how old these buildings were, but how old the antiques in them were.

The man who owns all these antique treasures, and is a rare antique himself, is none other than Ernest “Pop” Decoteau of Russell.

When I asked him where did he get the nickname “Pop”, he said, “Back when I was younger, I always made a practice of learning a job right. And whenever anyone had a question they'd ask me. They thought of me as their father on the job 'cause I was wisest.”

“Pop” is seventy-six years old, and at that age most people are pretty well done for. But “Pop” eyes wasting the rest of his life as a sin. He still chops his own wood, runs to the dump for one-third of the town, delivers stones to the people who ask for them, and does many more things for people. He is as healthy as a fifty-five or sixty year old man, yet he looks eighty to

eighty-five years old. Under all these features “Pop” is a very religious and sensitive old man.

It took until the second trip before I got a chance to go inside his house and really get to know “Pop” real well. As I entered the old house, the first thing I saw was the kitchen. It was totally obliterated with newspapers and unwashed dishes. He very kindly invited me to sit, but after a quick glimpse of the quarters, I said, “No, thanks anyway.” While in the kitchen boundaries and listening to “Pop”, I noticed an herb book lying on the table. When I asked him about the book, he said it was an old medicine book that had been in the family a long time. He not only reads from the book, but still makes some medicine. Some is made from cherry leaves and is used to make medicine which helps you throw up if you have an upset stomach.

As we walked out of the kitchen and into the living room, he pointed out some of the books which he had read awhile back. Some were the following: a book on Indian lore, religion, actors, dozens of farm books, a book on prices of all foods, a book on Jesus' life and many more and the astonishing thing about “Pop's” books is that there are anywhere from 100 - 145 pages in all of them. The rest of the house is pretty much the usual and didn't surprise me.

We both got sick of sitting inside, so we took a tour of his back yard supply houses. There is anything in them ranging from a bathtub to a bolt and screw, and he has many window panes with windows to fit.

On his land there are three of these buildings, each about thirty feet long and twenty feet wide.

He also has a chicken coop with eight chickens - seven Rhode Island Reds and one Cornish cross. They give about one egg a day. They look real healthy and "Pop" said they were.

He then showed me his wood pile he had cut that day (about one cord), and the big logs he still had left to split and saw that week (about two-three cords). For a man of seventy-six this is truly amazing. But amazing isn't a strange word, so it seems to "Pop" Decoteau. Ever since he was born in Russell in 1897 he has faced many rough hardships. When he was eighteen he joined the armed forces, and when he came out he got married and worked on the railroad for twenty-three years. He didn't make really enough money for both of them, but they stuck it out until "Pop" finally got a better job. Since then his wife has died. Even though "Pop" has experienced a lot of hardships, he is still living with pride and

confidence that he is still useful.

To me, this is what keeps a human being active, physically and mentally.

There are millions and millions of old people living in this world of ours, but for some reason "Pop" is different. When I asked him what he thought about modern times and situations, he didn't jump at me and start complaining. He started talking about the *good* things these times had to offer the town, state, and our country. He griped at a few things, but you could plainly see he had an optimistic view on all subjects.

"Pop" is in my words an optimistic, true, loyal and honest man. Now that I have seen what he's done, I have an infinite amount of respect for him, and I am truly convinced that his years on this earth have been a great asset to the Town of Russell.

(Brian Barnes wrote this article as a student at Gateway High School. "Pop" Decoteau died in 1980).



FROM THE HAMPSHIRE COUNTRY
JOURNAL

JULY 26, 1879

Cummington

Douglas S. Powell, who left his home last April, in a very abrupt manner, telling his family they would see no more of him, recently returned and attempted by force to carry away his infant child. His little son interfered, and succeeded in secreting the child until mother and child fled to one of the neighbors, and the father remains at home with the other children.

The grass crop is very heavy this season, in fact almost or quite without a parallel in the present generation. Haying help is scarce, and some of the farmers are offering the best of their grass at the "halves", taking their half in the field.

Arthur W. Tirrell of the sophomore class

in Dartmouth College, who is preparing for the ministry, delivered a religious lecture at the West Village Sunday evening.

Huntington

Burglars raided upon the Parks house last night, taking a few pennies from the drawer and helping themselves to cigars. Mr. Lafleur's coat and vest were taken outside the house and searched, but the money the scamps were evidently looking for was not there.

The iron for Pitcher bridge is in town and has nearly all been delivered on the ground where it is to be used. The bridge workmen are putting it in position as fast as possible.



BELIEVE IT OR NOT

Huntington-

Indian Princess- Believe it or not buried at Falley's Crossroads, (where the Federated Church stands now) is a negro woman and her illegitimate child. Legend has it that she was an Indian Princess but this is untrue.

She was actually an escaped slave living in the area and because she could not afford to support her baby she murdered it. However, her crime was discovered and the townspeople, taking the law into their hands, deemed it just and right to hang her in public. Thus done, they buried her and the baby at Falley's Crossroads so that all that travelled over her grave might help to stamp out the awfulness of her crime.

Lambson Road Indian Oven- Believe it or not there are some Indian ovens carved out of the rocky ledges of Horse Hill. It is believed that these were used for cooking and baking by the Indians.

Montgomery-

Alphonso Pettis- Believe it or not there was a millionaire that lived in Montgomery. He was born in 1882. His name was Alphonso P. Pettis. He left the town at the age of 6 and moved to Huntington. He applied for a peddling job, and moved up in the company to president and died at the age of 92. He left the town of Montgomery 20,000 dollars, which he invested in Steel Stock and made an 800 dollar income. He left Huntington 40,000 dollars to be used for the betterment of the town.

Knightville--Believe it or not twenty or so Indian families lived in the present Knightville Dam area. It was here that Rhoda Rhodes, a doctor from India, practiced her ancient techniques of medicine and cures.

Chester-Middlefield

Chandelier in Chester- Believe it or not there was chandelier stolen from a ship by pirates, and brought to Chester in the 1700's. It was supposedly donated to a church in Chester where it supplied light and beauty to it's sanctuary.

James Holland- Believe it or not there are a lot of old stories concerning a rugged old Chester man named James Holland. He was considered to be one of the toughest, bravest men in all Western Mass.

It all happened when he was living on a farm in a small town, when the people complained of rattlesnakes hiding out in a den. Deciding to exterminate these pesty reptiles, Mr. Holland very bravely removed his shoes and stockings and pulled up his pants so that the bottom half of his legs were completely naked. He grabbed a large stick and went into the cave after them. While fighting off an enormous rattler, another struck him from behind and sank his mighty fangs into the calves of Mr. Holland's legs. After wiping out the den of rattle snakes, he tied a cord around his leg between the wound and knee. Then he cut out the bitten flesh with his knife, he filled the cavity with salt, on which he placed a quantity of tobacco, tied his handkerchief over the cut and walked calmly home. As you can see this was quite a man. He thought of his experience with the rattlers as just a mere inconvenience. Later he joined the army at age 90.

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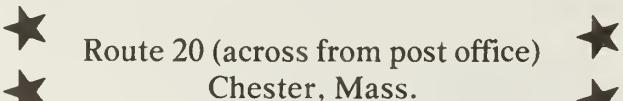
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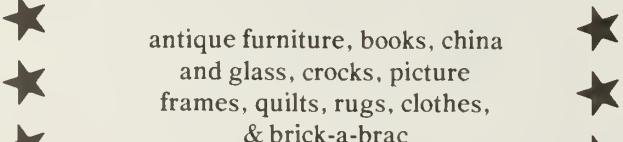
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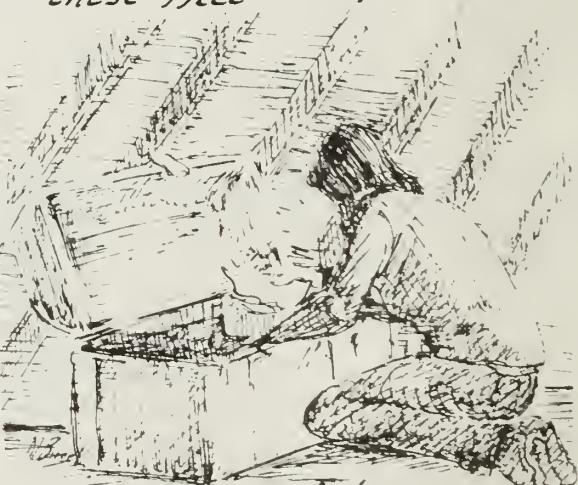


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A rural Handiwork of ancient gods.”*

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STONE WALLS

